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International Design Trends 28

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COVER: This custom-built Greenbryre mansion is a magnificent blend of opulence, elegance and functional family living.
Photo by Chel Photo.

HOME Front



Photo of Amanda Soulodre by Appl Photo

Saskatoon is a big city with small town charm. There are some truly amazing things happening around town that would have been unthinkable a few decades ago. Our growing arts, culture and festival scene, our infrastructure projects, new signature buildings, and a community of talented vibrant people have been putting Saskatoon on the map.

Inside this HOME, we're excited to share a glimpse into some amazing things happening in our big charming city. Come with us inside an incredible home built on a grand scale that still keeps family in mind. A big house with small town appeal is the hub of the neighbourhood (pg. 14).

We have a 'phoenix rising' testament to the spirit of a hard working couple who rebuilt a historic home nearly razed by fire (pg. 42). We Saskatonians believe in preserving our past as we embrace our future. Meet Charlene and Gary whose infill incorporates beloved materials from their original family home (pg. 37). It makes us happy to see how people manage to keep a small town feel alive in our big city home.

We are fortunate to have great design professionals who call Saskatoon

home. Six of them talk with us about international trends they've been watching. Find out what's in, what's out, and what's coming our way (pg. 28). Speaking of what's coming, check out what our city is doing to make winter more family friendly. The magic of Saskatoon's winter wonderland is just around the corner (pg. 46).

We bet we can bring a smile to your face with a nostalgic look at Saskatoon's history of holiday lights (pg. 58) and how some neighbourhoods have embraced Christmas illumination for decades. To get in the holiday spirit, we offer you some tips on building a perfect gingerbread house (pg. 54). And neighbourhood spirit is long lasting in historic Montgomery Place, the best preserved veterans' community in Canada (pg. 49). Take time this holiday season to reflect on what makes our city such a wonderful place to live.

Stay warm, enjoy your friends and family, and big smiles from the team at Saskatoon HOME!

Happy reading,

AMANDA SOULODRE
OWNER & PUBLISHER

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HOME

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READER PANEL

Thank you to our Winter Issue Reader Panel (below). The members of the Reader Panel change every issue and are made up of fans of the magazine who volunteer to help us select our stories. Their input allows us to choose stories that people in and around Saskatoon look forward to reading each and every issue. Once story ideas are chosen, we then assign them to our team of talented writers—meet them online at www.saskatoon-home.ca.



“I love the way HOME magazine covers a diverse spectrum of housing history, issues and ideas that you can find in Saskatoon.

Chris M. Guérette

CEO, Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association



“HOME is where the heart is.

Colin Chatfield

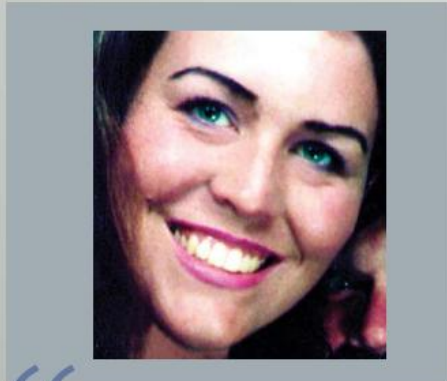
Photographer, Chatfield Photographics



“I love YXE. I love local. I love HOME magazine.

Bev Dubois

City Councillor, Ward 9



“Our home is more than a mere dwelling. It is our shelter where we gather with loved ones. It reflects who we truly are and reveals our greatest aspirations.

Shauna Allan

Selling Sales Manager,
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“I love being a part of my community, while helping create a magazine that embraces the local stories, homes and the people involved.

Zach Taylor

Pre-Social Work Student,
University of Saskatchewan



“HOME is a great local magazine. With historic stories and articles on current trends, it is always an interesting read and a great way to stay connected with the community.

Alison Cowan

Teacher

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REALITY CAPTURE

LASER TECHNOLOGY IN DRAFTING DESIGN



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



CADVANTAGE

It's not what you might think of as the oldest profession, but humankind has been sketching out detailed plans for structures since 2000 BC. Drafting is the art and science of drawing engineered plans as the literal blueprint for construction. In the olden days of drafting, architectural technologists measured with an assortment of medieval-looking tools and drew their two dimensional (2D) designs on paper by hand.

Since then, Sketchpad (in the 1960's), to Computer-aided design and drafting (CADD) and Building Information Modelling (BIM), technology in this sector has steadily and rapidly evolved. Now, from that evolutionary soup has emerged "reality capture" capabilities for panoramic 3D laser scanning, all at the push of a button.

Enter the BLK

Created by the German camera company Leica, and American software company Autodesk, the BLK360 represents the new wave of technology in measurement accuracy.

Weighing in at less than one

kilogram, it's, frankly, cute. Cute and smart. About the size of a stubby thermos, it can be placed at various locations to scan the environment and create "point clouds" that contain specific information on various coordinates. Images are high resolution, full colour, measuring detail within millimetres, and uses thermal imaging that is combined and transferred to design software.

Doug Schmidt of CADvantage, a 20-year-old building design and drafting services company in Saskatoon, is currently the only one using this technology on residential projects in the province. Since, starting his business, Doug has kept a close eye on how drafting and design technology has been advancing. He says the new reality capture technology means greater accuracy, less room for human error or discrepancies, and more precise information gathered in less time. Data is streamed to an iPad at which point the draftsman can integrate the information into the 3D software.

Small But Mighty

While larger industrial versions of reality capture technology can cost \$100,000 or more, the BLK comes with a price tag of \$25,000. Doug first saw the BLK360 demonstrated at the Autodesk University in Las Vegas a year ago. As someone who drew everything by hand when he started drafting in 1992, he was smitten with the BLK360.

"It was really intriguing," he says. "I could see how it would be a huge asset to the work we do."

The BLK has applications for use in other realms, too. Police and crime investigators use the spherical imagery to gather the most accurate information possible at, for example, accident or crime scenes.

Better In, Better Out

"We're always looking to improve the accuracy of the 'as built' process," says Doug. An 'as built' drawing is a graphical representation of an existing building. The traditional approach was to take measurements, make notes and take photographs to get the best 'as built'

possible. But inevitably, construction is rarely perfect, a measurement doesn't jibe, return site visits might be necessary. The more exact the 'as built' drawing, the more accurate the end product. The BLK has a measuring radius of 60 metres, and 360,000 points per second with an accuracy within six millimetres at 10 metres.

The first project for Doug's BLK was a rustic log cabin in northern Saskatchewan that was being raised to allow for a full foundation. Since the BLK came on board a year ago, CADvantage has used it on over 40 residential renos and about half their commercial projects.

"It would take a couple of people several hours to gather the same information that the BLK records in 20 minutes," says Doug. "We can fully understand a building much better in far less time. Homeowners, too, are thrilled with it. They're excited that such cutting edge technology is being used on their home." (i)

Karin Melberg Schwier

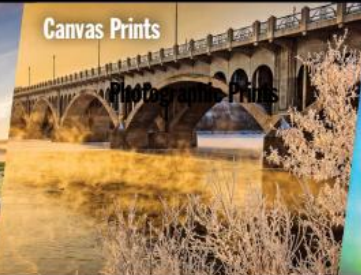
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A GRAND HOUSE ON THE GREEN

LUXURY HOME FOR BUSY GREENBRYRE FAMILY

When Dana and Kevin decided to build their new home in Greenbryre, they expected to find themselves ensconced in a quiet retirement community. But

soon after they moved in, they were pleasantly surprised to find their expectations were off the mark.

"We didn't think there would be a lot of families

out here," says Dana. "But it's almost all families. There are so many kids here and I don't think people realize that. It's really a family development."

Their two children, Eden,

12, and Luke, ten, were equally thrilled with their new neighbourhood, and quickly made friends. The home—and the golf course community itself—has a



 **JULIE BARNES**

 **CHEL PHOTO**

resort-like feel with a family-friendly vibe.

Kevin and Dana's house took two years to build, and they had spent two years before that meticulously

planning every detail before breaking ground. Their ultimate goal was to create a relaxed, livable home with areas for the family to spend quality time together. ➤

WINTER 2018 Saskatoon **HOME**



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A Grand House on the Green 15



Kevin and Dana relax in their light-filled living room with their daughter, Eden, son, Luke, and the family dog, Scout.

They also wanted to provide their children with plenty of activities and spaces where they could easily gather with friends.

It's safe to say mission accomplished, and that's before you even step inside.

Four-Season Shangri-La

The backyard includes a swimming pool, trampoline, putting green, and a sport court that can be used for basketball, tennis or volleyball. There's also a sprawling grassy area to play catch, football, or fetch with the family dog, a Havanese named Scout.

"A lot of the time we'll come home and there will be four or five kids in the backyard, which is great," says Kevin.

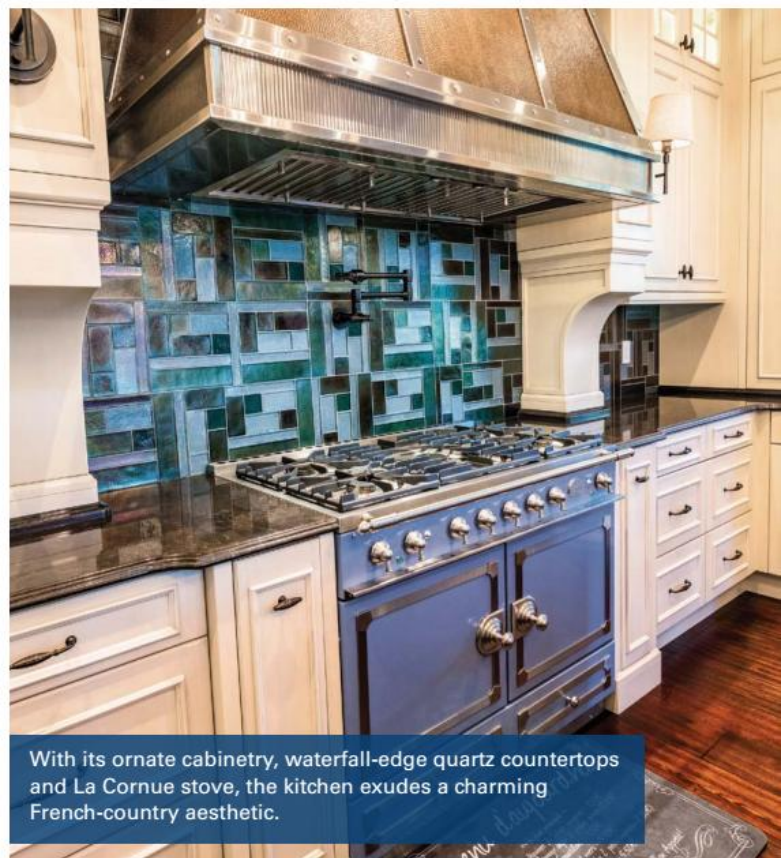
Dana adds, "It was really built with that in mind—as a place

where the kids would want to be, and bring their friends."

An outdoor kitchen, hot tub, fireplace and plenty of seating is found on the covered wrap-around deck. The family barbeques in the outdoor kitchen year-round thanks to ceiling-mounted heaters.

The sport court also sees four-season action. In the winter, it's flooded and transforms into a skating rink. Next door is a clubhouse with a sleeping area, kitchen, bathroom and sitting area. There's a convenient warm-up space with benches to lace up skates. An adjacent fire pit adds an extra element of comfort.

"We've had a few skating parties," says Dana. The family and their guests stay warm by catching up around the fire pit with mugs of steaming hot chocolate in hand.



With its ornate cabinetry, waterfall-edge quartz countertops and La Cornue stove, the kitchen exudes a charming French-country aesthetic.

The clubhouse was also designed with their kids in mind, says Kevin. "If our son wants to have his buddies over, they can go there and hang out and have a sleepover."

Rustic Charm

Although the scale of the house is grand, every room feels lived in and cozy. Copper, iron and wood details lend a warm rustic touch, while grasscloth wall coverings, sumptuous curtains, plush sofas and natural stone cladding add layers of visual interest and texture.

"We didn't want it to feel like a new house when you walked in," says Dana. "I wanted it to feel like something that has been here forever. I think when you walk in, with all the details and layers, it feels like a home that could have been built a hundred years ago." ➤



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Dana says they chose a wood-burning fireplace for their home because they love the one at their cottage and use it all the time.

One such feature that brings a historical feel to the kitchen is the striking La Cornue stove. The appliances have been handcrafted and made-to-order in France for over 100 years. Julia Child was once a proud owner of a La Cornue.

"This isn't one of their higher-end models by any means," says Dana. Kevin adds, "But I think it's a stove that will probably be here for 40 or 50 years. I don't know what could go wrong with it. It's heavy duty, but very simplistic at the same time."

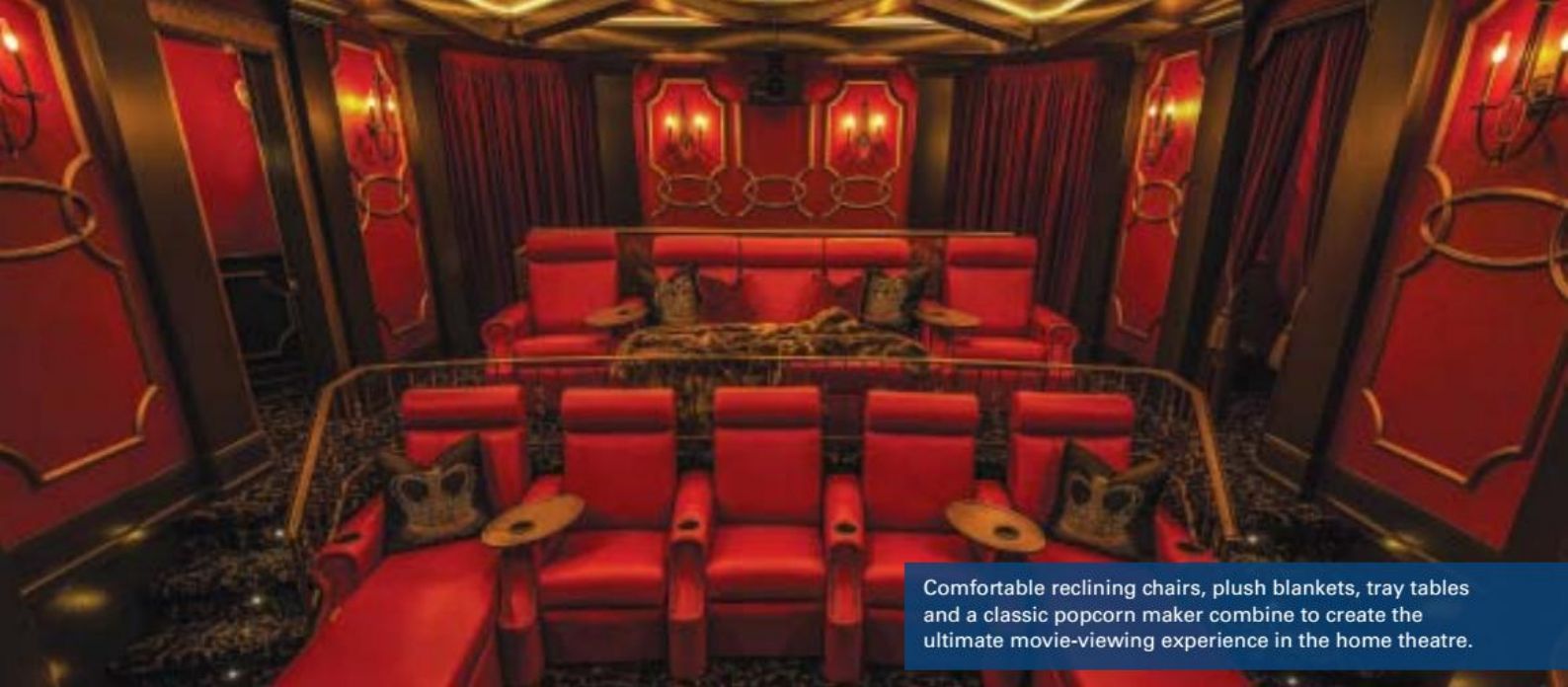
Friends and Family Gathering Places

Every space in the home is well used, says Kevin. At the bottom of the basement stairs sits a comfortable nook with a round table where the family gathers for game nights. Around the corner is



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a gym with a sprung floor that Eden, a dancer, uses almost daily to rehearse and practice Pilates.

The pièce de résistance is an envy-inducing home theatre. From the backlit movie posters lining the entrance, to the popcorn

maker and two Juliet balconies, no detail was overlooked in this opulent cinematic space.

"It's an excuse for the family to get together and have popcorn," says Kevin. "You grab some blankets and everyone snuggles up ➤

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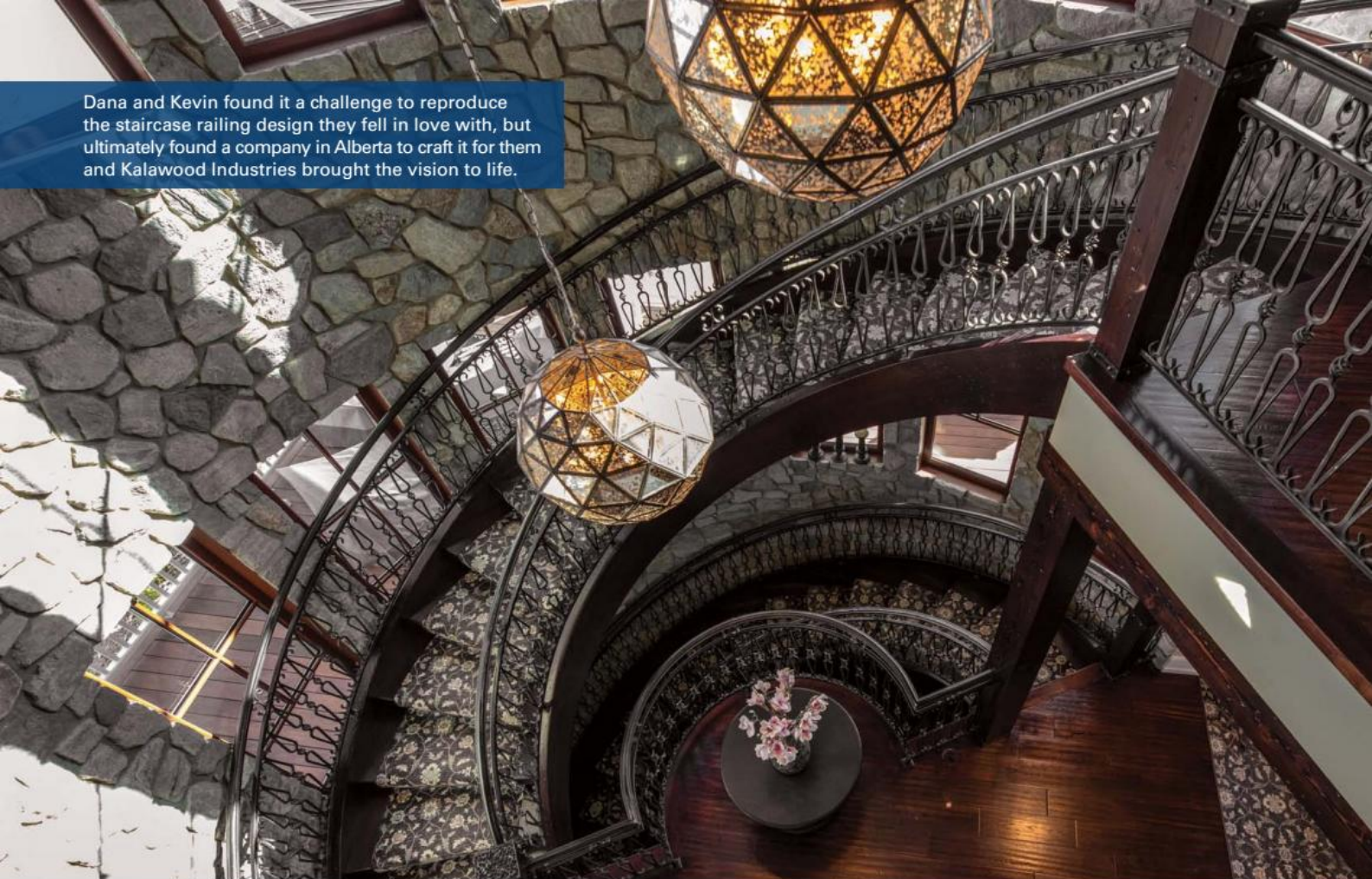
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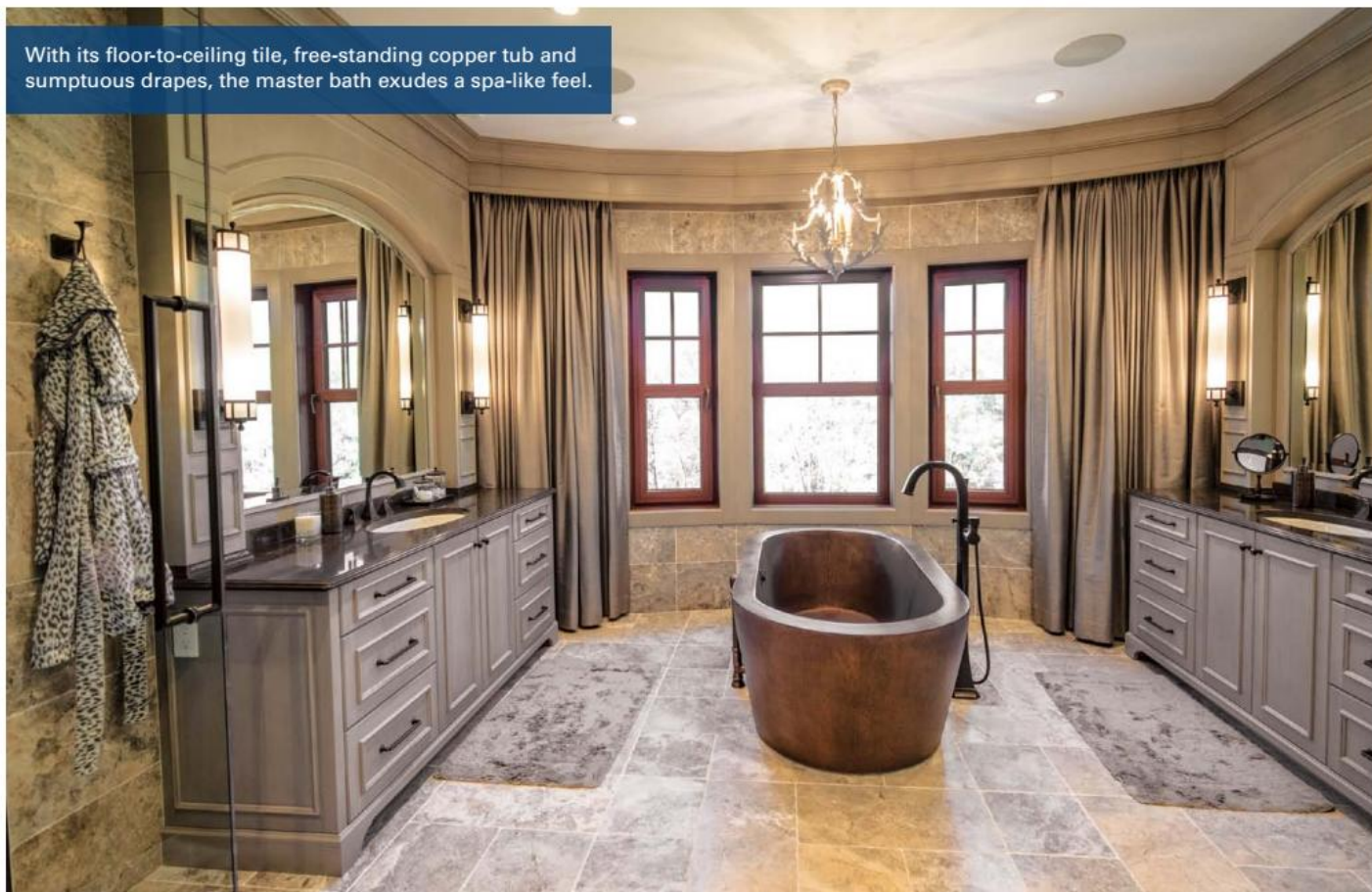


The whole family collaborated to select the backlit movie posters that line the entrance to the home theatre.

Dana and Kevin found it a challenge to reproduce the staircase railing design they fell in love with, but ultimately found a company in Alberta to craft it for them and Kalawood Industries brought the vision to life.



With its floor-to-ceiling tile, free-standing copper tub and sumptuous drapes, the master bath exudes a spa-like feel.



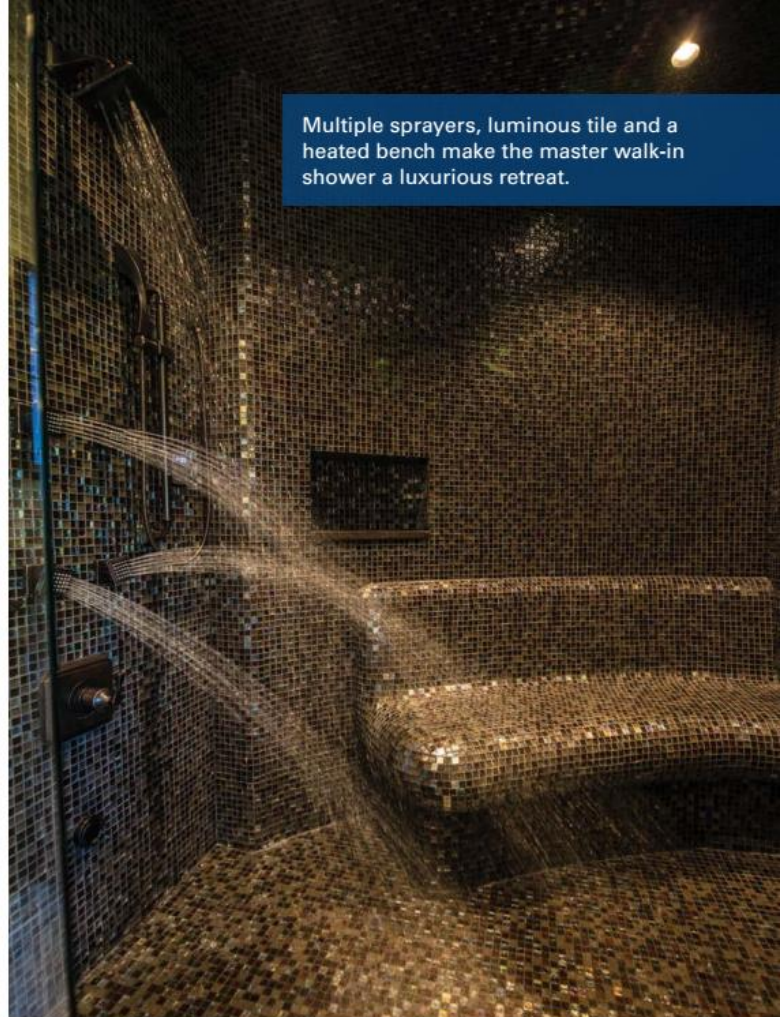


and watches a movie.”

With the click of a button, the movie screen recesses into the ceiling and a stage is revealed. Eden has been known to invite her friends here to perform musicals together, or simply use the stage for dance rehearsals. A green room situated at stage left provides space for Eden and her fellow performers to prepare before their shows.

If that’s not enough excitement, there’s also a full microphone system so the kids—and kids at heart—can sing karaoke.

The theatre is also the perfect space for larger gatherings. “We’ll have movie nights with other kids here. Eden will have a movie night with four girlfriends over,” says Kevin. “And it’s the perfect place to have the boys over to watch sporting events.” ➤



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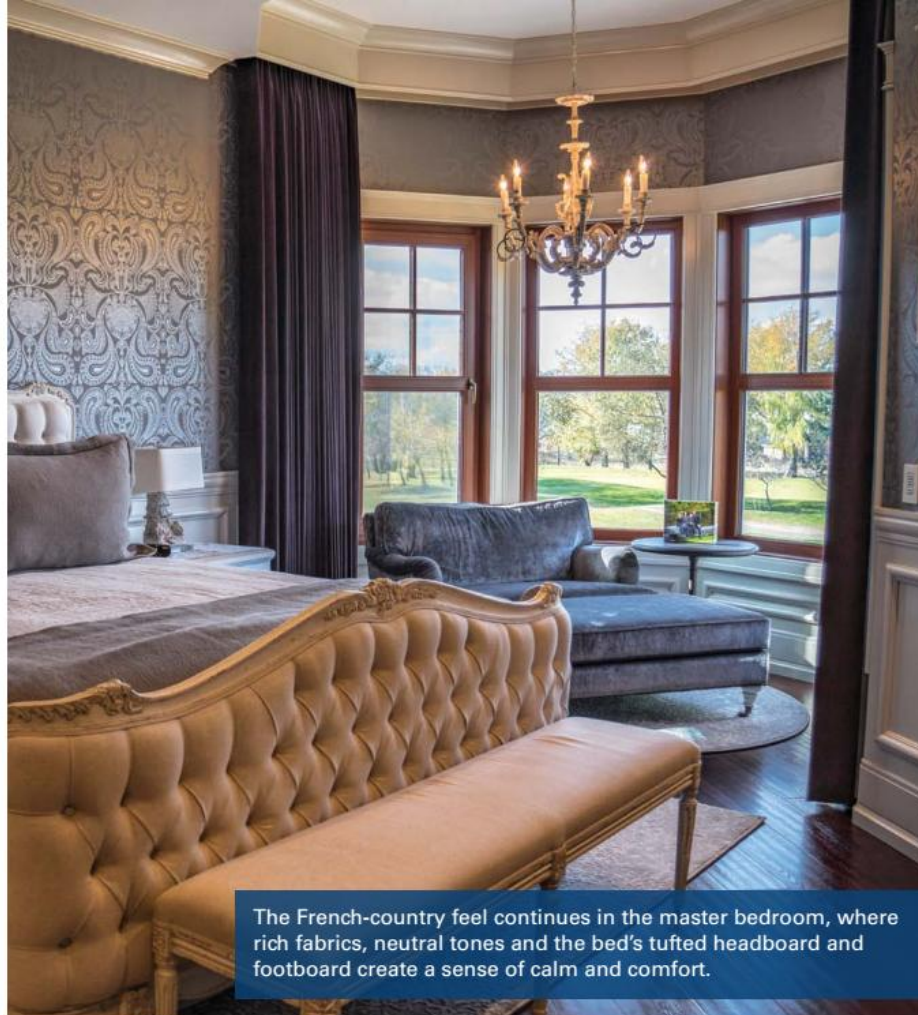
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Custom Home Collaboration

Kevin and Dana worked with Colorado-based residential designer Jon Rentfrow on the home's design after images of his projects kept popping up during the planning stages. "We thought, if we keep finding these images and liking them, maybe we should just get him to design it," says Dana. "He's all about designing small livable spaces."

They hired Decora Homes as their builder, and Atmosphere Interior Design. Though they already had a strong vision and plenty of fixtures chosen during the early planning stages, Dana says Atmosphere helped them make bolder choices. That included a leopard print fabric that lines a cork board in their study, and a luxurious onyx counter and backsplash in the ➤



The French-country feel continues in the master bedroom, where rich fabrics, neutral tones and the bed's tufted headboard and footboard create a sense of calm and comfort.

A group of seven people (six men and one woman) standing in a circle on a tiled floor, smiling for a photo. They are all dressed in business casual attire. The background is a large, open space with a tiled floor and some potted plants in the corner.



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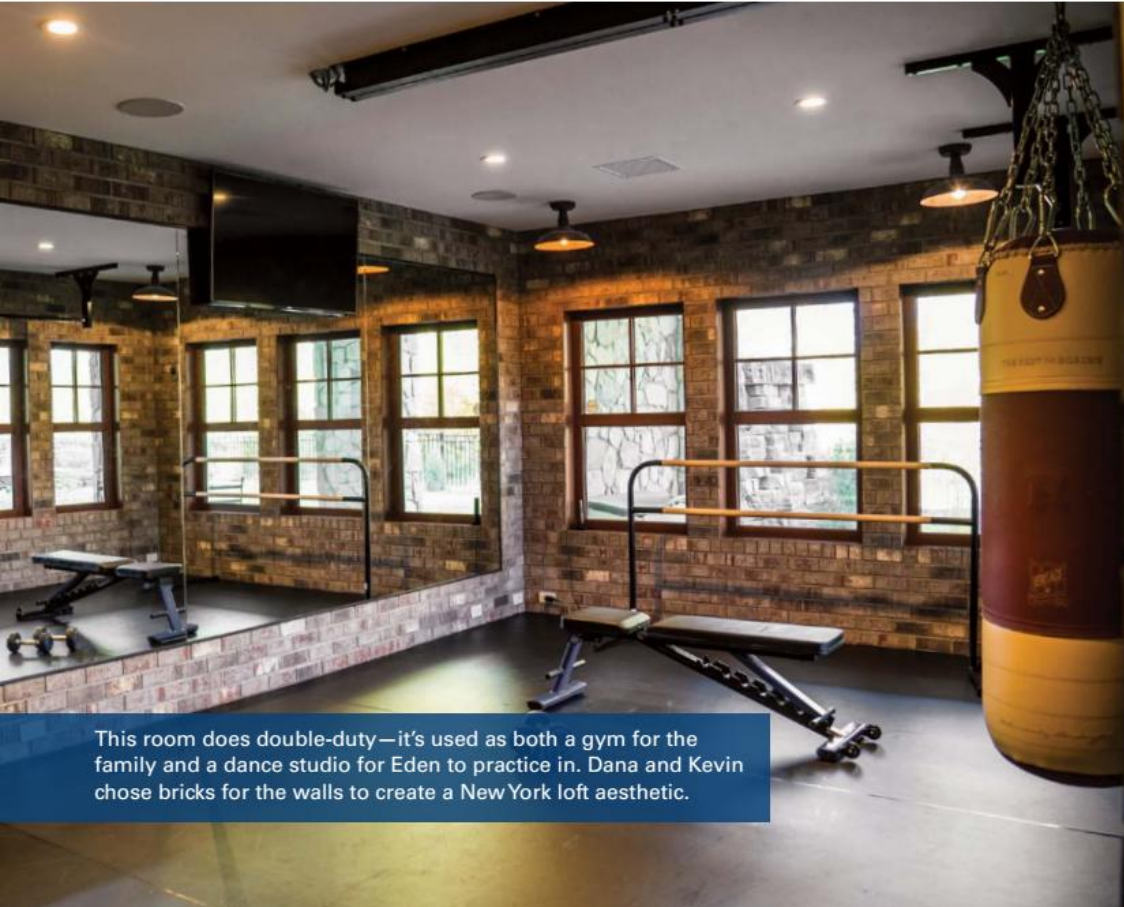
The family enjoys playing games together in this snug space in the walk-out basement.



"Our office was built in such a way that there is space for our kids to come in and be with us while we're working," says Dana. The desk was made by a local artist.



A cozy window seat in Eden's bedroom provides the perfect perch for her to play her guitar and watch over the neighbourhood.



This room does double-duty—it's used as both a gym for the family and a dance studio for Eden to practice in. Dana and Kevin chose bricks for the walls to create a New York loft aesthetic.

guest powder room.

Atmosphere also helped create a cohesive look and feel, she says. "We're good at picking out individual things, but not necessarily knowing how to put them all together, so that was what they really helped with."

"This is not a home you typically build every day," says Rhonda Lula, co-owner of Decora Homes. Rhonda says extra engineering and some reconfiguration was required, "but that's what makes building homes like this fun and exciting. You have to come up with new ideas and research products and suppliers you don't typically use, but then you can't wait to see the final product."

Kevin and Dana were



The front porch was a critical element in the design of the home. Dana and Kevin love sitting here and watching the sun come up on summer mornings with a cup of coffee.

impressed with Decora's ability to source materials that can be tricky to find locally—such as the copper for their roof. "They were exceptional builders," says Kevin. "They helped source items that were not commonly used by most local builders. They're not afraid to think outside the box and be creative."

No Fences Make Good Neighbours

Dana, Kevin and their kids have lived in their home for over a year now, and are clearly thrilled with the lifestyle and sense of community they've found in Greenbryre. Neighbours walking their dogs always stop and chat, and older kids gather at the nearby golf course's clubhouse for French fries.

"What I find is that it's ➤

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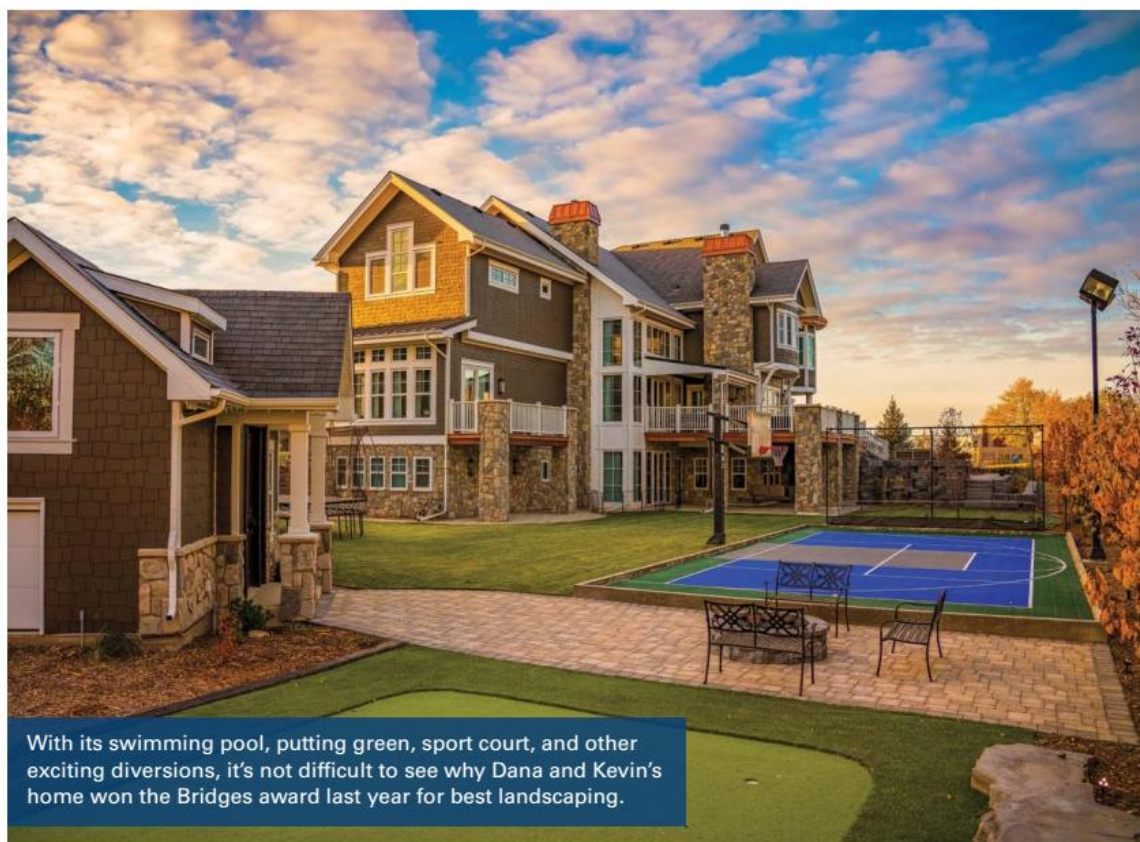
From the living room, the family has a view of the 10th green at the Greenbryre Golf & Country Club. The entire family enjoys playing golf together.



almost a little bit small-townish because everyone is looking after each other's kids," says Kevin. Dana adds, "Everyone knows everyone. You're watching out for each other."

There have been times they've looked out their windows to find up to ten neighbourhood kids playing on their basketball court, and Dana perfectly summarizes the welcoming, neighbourly atmosphere she's found here: "We don't want to put up fences." (H)

Julie Barnes



With its swimming pool, putting green, sport court, and other exciting diversions, it's not difficult to see why Dana and Kevin's home won the Bridges award last year for best landscaping.

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INTERNATIONAL DESIGN TRENDS TO WATCH

 **KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER**

Saskatoon HOME asked six of Saskatoon's most sought-after interior designers (Adrienne Fedorowich, Crystal Bueckert, Lucienne Van Langen) and interior decorators (Colleen Wilson, Sandra Epp, Tamara Bowman) about the international trends they've been following. Even though these developments may not have yet reached our houses on the prairies, or are just emerging here, these six discuss the form, function and features of trends they've been tracking.

TREND WATCH:

Flexible spaces

"Not every function needs its own room. In Saskatchewan, we tend to design under the assumption that spaces in your home serve particular functions. That can increase costs and use up or add square footage quickly. A new trend is to design spaces that are flexible in their function. So instead of a living room with large oversized furniture, we have a sitting room that can become a yoga studio and a guest space. Flooring has to be resistant to scratches and dents. This trend is something often seen in regions and cities with higher density."

Elements of style:

- » Make a space earn its keep.
- » When space is at a premium, ask what multiple functions can a single space serve?
- » No more dedicated guest bedroom waiting for an occupant.
- » Easy to transform traditional space for various uses.
- » Easy-to-move multi-use furniture and scuff-resistant flooring.
- » Clever built-in storage for change-over items at the ready when needed.



ADRIENNE FEDOROWICH

Design + Project Director,
Studio 2.0 Interior Design +
Photography + Construction

NCIDQ #27111 Registered
Interior Designer, IDAS

Instagram handle:
@studio2point0ID



"For years we have seen neutrals, such as white on white in kitchens, and now there is a move towards warmer kitchen finishes and more colourful interiors. Not sure it's for you? Just accent timeless neutrals with a few trendy colours. It doesn't cost much to change. Gold was huge years ago and is again; the limitation now is it typically costs more than other finishes. Outdoor living spaces have been popular in warmer climates, and we're seeing more in our own market. We haven't seen much in condo living yet, but the big city luxury condominiums offering spacious outdoor living space are the ones high-end buyers want. No cramped quarters on a tiny balcony. Instead, condo owners want the feeling of a luxurious outdoor space where they can enjoy alfresco living and entertaining."



COLLEEN WILSON

Co-owner and Director of Design,
The Mid-West Group & Meridian
Development Corp.

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TREND WATCH:

Colourful interiors and outdoor living space

Elements of style:

- » More colourful kitchens feature textural elements such as the pairing of wood with gloss or matte painted finishes.
- » What goes around comes around: teal is back in rich tones of green and blue.
- » Frequently paired with gold detailing, like a teal chair with gold metal legs, or teal toss cushion with metallic gold accent thread or gold zipper.
- » Pocket, stacking or folding doors open walls to bring the outdoors inside seamlessly.
- » Front yards for townhouses, or larger condo terraces and balconies are desirable features in outdoor living areas.



Photo Credit: CityHome at Escala by Meridian Development

TREND WATCH:

Thick walls, big glazing, and disciplined materials

Elements of style:

- » R56 walls up to 16" thick and attic space with R100 insulation.
- » Airtight building methods.
- » Floor to ceiling glazing and new window construction with insulated frames, thermal breaks and quadruple glazing.
- » Expansive glazing creates passive solar heating during winter months.
- » Proper shading, a key to large glazing especially if the house is well insulated.
- » Disciplined materials, also referred to as 'honest materials,' like concrete, wood and steel both inside and out.

"Our favourite contemporary trend includes thick insulated walls, full height glazing and disciplined materials, which are those used for their own characteristics and substance, rather than to imitate something else. Super-insulated houses are standard construction in many countries, making for low energy-use buildings and comfortable homes. Canada is catching up. Expansive glazing blends indoor and outdoor living space and broadens the view. The use of as disciplined materials is a long standing architectural principle and offers comfortable textures, warmth in colour, and a durability that wears well over time."



CRYSTAL BUECKERT

Owner,
BLDG Studio

NCIDQ #33176 Registered
Interior Designer, IDAS

Instagram handle:
@bldgstudio



Photo Credit: Pete Lawrence

TREND WATCH:

Natural stone as interior cladding

"One of my favourite trends, seen all over Europe, is the use of natural stone as interior cladding. My favourite spaces are those with great texture that make you want to reach out and touch things. Natural stone does that for me and it instantly connects to the natural surroundings outdoors when you see both it and the view to the outside at the same time. We don't build with it here enough due to upfront cost, but there are definite advantages."

Elements of style:

- » Stone creates a sense of longevity and safety.
- » Warm and cozy when lighted properly.
- » Never goes off trend and can be used in any interior or exterior style.
- » Upfront cost may be high, but natural stone never needs to be replaced or repaired in the same way as does wood and drywall.
- » Stone patinas over time and becomes even more beautiful.



LUCIENNE VAN LANGEN

Principal Interior Designer,
Luminary Design

NCIDQ #29962 Registered
Interior Designer, IDAS

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TREND WATCH:

Replicating historical European design



SANDRA EPP

Owner,
3Design

Instagram handle:
@3designonline

"I recently toured London, Portugal and France on the lookout for European design ideas to apply to my projects in Canada. The magnificent history and architectural appreciation stood out for me, including the European attitude to preserve the past in their design techniques. It's something we crave in our Canadian homes. Inspiration for this bathroom came from a cafe on Rue Cler in Paris. I saw similar tiles in Porto adorning massive exterior walls, along with bakery floors and Delft-inspired mosaic in train stations and countless churches. My clients, Sara and Neil, intuitively compare attention to design detail to the overall European approach to food. 'The utmost quality of all the ingredients separately makes the finished product so exquisite.'"

Elements of style:

- » Original structure and bones are honoured, while seamlessly layering modern touches.
- » Scale is massive, substantial, sturdy.
- » Natural stone and mosaic tiles are used.
- » The bold visual impact of European selections creates a sense of architectural longevity.



Photo Credits: Robin Cottington



Photo Credit: Porcelanosa USA

TREND WATCH:

Porcelain wood-look tiles

"In Spain for Porcelanosa's annual expo, we were invited to tour their showrooms, and production and distribution facilities. We were amazed by their artisanal wood porcelain tile collection that uses the elements of natural wood to create stunning design-centric features. The porcelain tiles have the organic staples of wood with unique textures and knots; some styles have concrete accents, and natural variation paired with the durability of porcelain. The versatility of the material gives us the ability to create patterns with visual impact on walls, floors, bathrooms, ceilings, fireplaces, and even exteriors so the tile can be used in a whole new way." (B)

Elements of style:

- » The style offers innovative versatility transcending different design aesthetics and spaces.
- » Equally desirable for array of uses, from modern minimalist office, front entry feature wall, to classic flooring inlay for traditional home.
- » Springs from style resurgence of industrial and rustic interior materials like barn-board.
- » Realistic natural elements with the look and feel of organic materials won't go out of style.



Photo Credit: Erin Crooks

TAMARA BOWMAN

Owner & Creative Director,
Metric Design

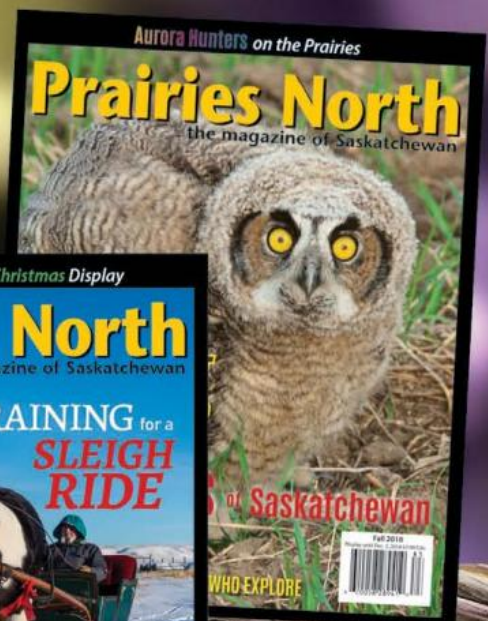
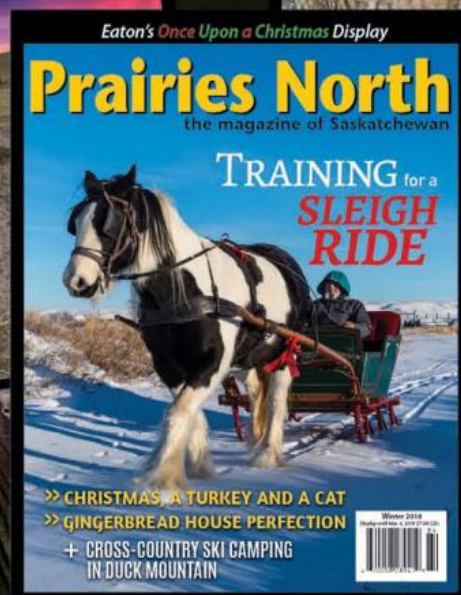
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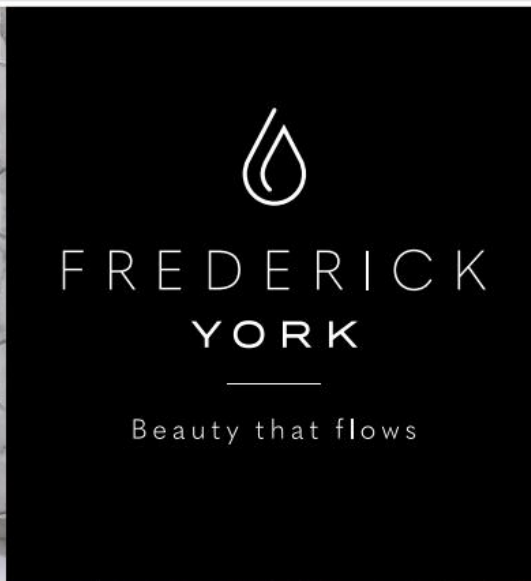
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KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



LILLIAN LANE

Gary Bainbridge and Charlene Ennis met in the early 1980s at Walter Murray High School and think of themselves as the “should have been high school sweethearts but weren’t” couple. Fourteen years later, each with small children in tow, they met again on a Friday night in the basement

at the J.S. Wood Library. Not a typical first date, but soon they knew it was much more than a hunch. They knew they would blend a family, and that’s the way they became their own version of *The Brady Bunch*. (Try to get that theme song out of your head.)

In the spring of 1997, the newly merged clan happily

moved into 525 Third Street East in Buena Vista, a 1400-square-foot character home, now lovingly referred to as “Old 525.”

“When Gary and I met, I mean met again, I had three children,” explains Charlene. “Bryce was 12, Chelsea 10, and Coral eight. Gary’s son Faron was seven.” In 2005,

twins Declan and Lux came along. Old 525 was filled to the rafters with two adults, six children, two cats, one aquarium, and two households of stuff. “It was a full house.” No relation to *Full House*. More like a modern day *Yours, Mine and Ours*.

“We thought the house was ‘move-in ready,’” ➤

says Gary, a lawyer. "But we spent the next 20 years trying to make it 'move-in ready.' It was probably built in the mid-1940s. The previous owner had added a distinctive mansard roofline to the second storey."

Over the years, the family decorated with warm cozy colours, and 525 was the site of countless family gatherings, dinner parties, large and small celebrations, and visits with lots of family and friends. It was a happy household; even though kids doubled up in bedrooms at the start, it never felt cramped. A gas range in an island was added, and they installed terra cotta Mexican paving tiles throughout the kitchen. The big living room fireplace was the heart of the home.

Cracks Start to Show

The house was beginning to show its wartime age. Its bones were never very good. The basement space was limited with a low ceiling. In fact, one of the first projects in 1997 was to dig out several inches of concrete floor.

"I remember jackhammering out a few inches of the floor with Charlene's dad," says Gary, who is six foot five. "We hauled chunks of concrete out in buckets. When we were done, I could at least stand up down there." Finally, Gary and Dad, "then a spry 69-year-old," helped build two more bedrooms and a bathroom in the basement for the kids.

"About a year in," remembers Charlene, "all of the kids had their own bedroom, so that was a luxury. One un-luxury was that there were only two bathrooms for



To reclaim the original bricks from the chimney, Gary, right, and Charlene enlisted the help of her willing parents Mary, left, 85, and Les, centre, 90, who have pitched in with many 525 home renos over the years.

Photo Credit: Charlene Ennis



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The location of the heart-of-the-home fireplace is the same as it was in the original 525.



The Estevan Bricks of the old chimney add warmth and texture to the entryway, and the same style of beloved Mexican tiles adorn the foyer.

six busy people."

Windows were scarce on the main floor so natural light was at a premium. A large chimney for the beloved fireplace sat right at the front exterior, leaving no room for a front window. Charlene and Gary longed for a bit more space for themselves.

"We looked into a renovation," says Charlene. "But we'd still have the low basement ceiling, and things were coming to the end of their natural life. Did we want to spend the rest of our lives patching the house together? We loved it, but it was time."

Difficult Family Decision

Oddly, Charlene and Gary hadn't spent time complaining about Old 525. They never talked about a bigger house or better kitchen.

"It just sort of happened," says Charlene. "We dealt with problems as they came. No one complained about the size, the low basement, too

few bathrooms, the leaking roof, the drafty doors and windows. If you asked us in April of 2017 what our plans were, we would have said our annual Christmas party with lots of people in December just like always."

But by May, the couple toyed with 'what if?' and by June wondered, 'could we really do this?' By July, they were in touch with a builder.

One thing Charlene and Gary were certain about was the location and their proximity to Broadway and downtown, the tree-lined streets, and the lot. Their oldest son Bryce built a new infill house just a block away, and they coveted his space and "newness." So that left just one thing to do: call a family meeting.

"It was July 2017," remembers Charlene. "Chelsea was managing O'Shea's Pub downtown so we called everyone to meet there." A good parenting rule is 'don't ask if there's ➤



Tongue and groove kitchen ceiling boards transformed into a new fireplace surround. Estevan Brick from the 1902 plant in southeast Saskatchewan was salvaged, cleaned and turned into a foyer feature wall. A solid fir door saved from the Thorton Elementary School demolition, once the 525 front door, now opens on the detached garage.

no choice to be made,' so Gary and Charlene told the assembly it was time to tear down Old 525.

"It was really hard for the kids to take," says Gary. "There were lots of tears. The kids had grown up there. For the twins, it was their only home. No one wanted a new, better house so why were we doing this? It was a pretty difficult discussion, and a lot more emotional than we expected. But it was time for the house to go."

"We were firm about the demolition, but we did talk with the kids about preserving as many memorable elements of Old 525 to use as much as we could in New 525," says Charlene.

Unlike the children, Charlene's elderly parents were excited about the decision. They had helped on various projects over the years, and were ready to pitch in once again.

Preserving Materials, Preserving Memories

It was time for the house to go, but the memories were

more important than ever.

"Our goal throughout was to keep the warmth and colours of Old 525," says Charlene. "And what better way to do that than to take some of our favourite textures like the bricks, wood, and tile colours. Not just bring the memories, but try to bring the actual things with us."

Chimney Bricks

"We had a beautiful brick chimney that ran up from the basement," she says. "It was exposed floor to ceiling in the kitchen. We knocked it down and set up a workstation in the front yard. Bless their hearts, Mom, 85, and Dad, 90, helped wash and clean all those bricks so we could reuse them as a feature wall in the new entryway." The new wood-burning fireplace is in the same location in New 525 as it was in Old.

Mexican Tiles

The gorgeous Mexican tiles, sadly, couldn't be removed without too much

damage. But on a trip to Mexico in 2018, Charlene and Gary went to their favourite tile store, had new replicas made, added colourful ceramic tiles, and shipped the lot back to Saskatoon. They were laid in the front entryway, and the ceramics were also used as accents in other rooms.

Tongue and Groove Ceiling Boards

"Our kitchen ceiling had beautiful 16-foot lengths of tongue and groove boards," says Gary. "We took all of that down, de-nailed it, and used it to wrap our basement fireplace. What was left over is used in Bryce's basement a block away."

School Door

"Many years ago, Thornton Elementary School was torn down and the materials were being salvaged," recalls Charlene. "We went over to see what there was. I threw my body in front of a beautiful solid fir door that's about two and a half

inches thick. It has a beveled-glass window." The couple refinished it, and mounted a knocker they fell in love with on a trip to Ireland. "We used that as our front door for close to 20 years." Now it has new pride of place as the person-door on the garage.

Make Old 525 New 525

It's said a happy home has an aura, an energy felt by anyone who sets foot inside. For the Ennis-Bainbridge clan, a few salvaged reminders of Old 525 and 20 years of good memories infuse New 525 with the same vibrancy and warmth. Charlene, Gary, the kids still at home, and "the boys" – LaPerm and Balinese cats Bubbles and Skooch – moved into the new build in September.

The whole bunch feels right at home. (H)

Karin Melberg Schwier



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Adam Gartner and Trista Olszewski are high on their newest income property.

OUT OF THE ASHES

AN INCOME PROPERTY GOES FROM FLAMES TO FABULOUS



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



JEFF NATTRESS

When Trista Olszewski and Adam Gartner were waking up with their morning coffee in November 2017, they weren't thinking about buying another rental property. They already had three, though they always kept an open mind. When their realtor Chris May called and said, "You've got to see this one," they thought it

couldn't hurt to look. "We don't seem to go looking for houses," Adam says. "They seem to find us."

The couple had combined their talents to become income property developers—Iron Ring Developments—in addition to their day jobs. She's an accountant; he's a general contractor and engineer, and neither is

afraid to roll up their sleeves. Each property they had represented a lot of sweat equity and investment. The couple arrived at the 1923-era brick three-storey on 11th Street East, a little No Exit street just off Saskatchewan Crescent West. A stream of potential buyers was already on site. Most saw an unsalvageable fire-ravaged

home and turned on their heels. Trista and Adam heard angels.

Diamond in the Rough

"It was such a mess," Trista closes her eyes. "Old knob and tube wiring was the cause of the fire; it had been on the news. The house sat vacant for a year after the owner left town. There was still literally a big black hole

in the roof. Piles of charred debris. Cats had been living inside. But we could see it was beautiful."

The interior of all three floors had been coated with white smoke odour eliminator, and the home seemed oddly serene. By that afternoon, they put in an offer, determined to salvage the nearly century-old home. On December 8th, they were the new owners.

"We couldn't wait to get started."

Phoenix Rising

"We knew we could do something really great with the house," says Adam. "It was a beautiful brick three-storey. Even though it was zoned R2, it had long been used as three separate suites with a walkout basement. So it was grandfathered in to stay that way if we wanted." They wanted.

A sweet part of the deal was a purchase price below market value because of the fire damage, so they had room to do the restoration and repair work.

What the couple knew for sure is that with such a sought-after location, sound structure and beautiful period-piece brick exterior, this home could rise literally from the ashes as a desirable place to live.

Assessing the Project

Most of the significant damage was to the third storey roof. Still, the house had been essentially gutted to prevent the fire from spreading. Given the knob and tube wiring and wall insulation of hay and horsehair, it was a miracle the house was still standing.

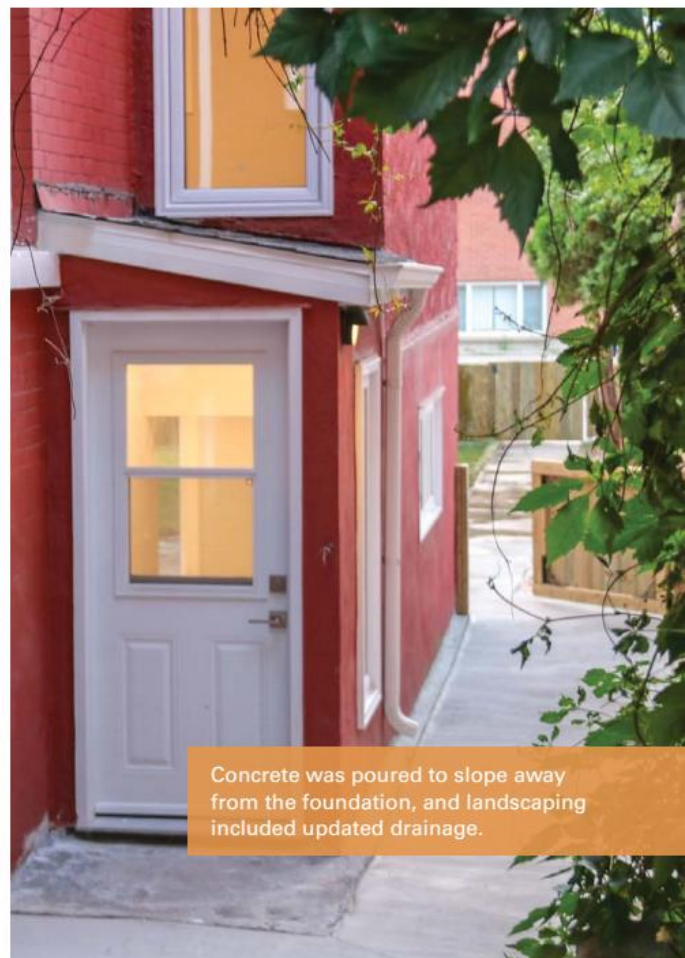
"In a weird way, it was almost easier to take on a house that had so ➤



The cause of the fire was traced to old knob and tube wiring. Damage to the roof was extensive, and the interior of the entire home was gutted.



The home's original kitchen was located here, but it was very small and giving it a functional amount of usable space was a challenge. Now, each of the suites features a similar kitchen with different layouts.



Concrete was poured to slope away from the foundation, and landscaping included updated drainage.

much damage," says Adam. "We were at Ground Zero. It was all right there. We knew, mostly, what we'd gotten ourselves into."

Adam started with the basement and a "scabby mechanical room that had bad things done to it" over the decades. "Bits and pieces had been added over decades, and no one ever removed the old stuff, opting to abandon it instead." Stripping it all out included remnants of an old boiler, exposed duct work, three scabbed-in furnaces, outdated electrical, and decades worth of telephone and data lines. "It was gross," says Adam.

The new mechanical service features high efficient furnaces, centralized in a single fire rated mechanical room, and a 90-gallon water heater with recirculation

lines to provide hot water all the way to the washroom on the third floor. Each suite has a new electrical panel with new power lines.

"Most importantly, we put in a full out data panel for full fiber optic internet, wired and wireless, over commercial grade network equipment. It's a small modern touch, desirable to all tenants but something character homes often lack."

A 'Never Go Back' Philosophy

As rental property owners, Trista and Adam believe that quality craftsmanship and good materials minimize the 'go back time' time later for fixes and repairs. A rental property should stand up to the wear and tear of tenants, and people can live comfortably in a home without repeat landlord visits.

Because Trista and Adam

had developed relationships with suppliers for their other properties, they made bulk purchases of appliances, cabinetry, flooring, fixtures and other materials for all three suites. That buying power gave the couple a break in costs without compromising on quality.

Aside from bringing in plumbing, roofing and some electrical trades, the work was largely "self-performed," says Adam. "I'm only 28, but with my engineering background and my willingness to get in there and do what needs to be done, we could handle most of the work ourselves." His father Bernard works in the mining and exploration industry but happens to love renovating. He was recruited on his days off to wield a paintbrush.





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The original door at left was nailed shut with useless hinges. The replacement door is an odd size but with custom trim work, it is now a character feature. At centre is Jolene who, along with brother Steve, spent almost every day of the reno on site. Jolene developed a fascination with power tools. At right is a testament to creative drywalling. Originally a bathroom, the angled roofline was preserved to add interest to the space.

Keeping the Character

Many houses in this area of the city had impressive views of the river, but homeowners in the 1920s tended to not take advantage of them. The river was a place to dump refuse, so people preferred to turn their backs on it or at least obscure the view. Today, the view is a top feature.

"The second storey had a window with a fantastic view of the river and downtown," says Trista. "But it had been a bathroom so the impact of the money shot was lost. Now it's the second bedroom. We put in the largest window we could fit in the gables. It extends to each roof line, and 14 inches above the floor."

The couple loved the vaulted ceiling and sloped

rooflines in the third storey bedrooms and bathroom. Though dry walling was tricky, they preserved the angles.

Not many interior features were left to salvage, although as the couple scans through the hundreds of project photos on a laptop, they can point out a couple. The third floor bannister and newel post, and the curved stairs from the second to third floor, all grandfathered-in building details, give a nod to 1923. While windows were all replaced, they kept the grilles to look like original.

The distinctive barrel vaulted soffit over the third storey windows at the roof's peak in front was a keeper, too. Because of age and deterioration, a copy was

traced, recut and installed. Instead of removing the original attic framing made of hand-cut fir, they kept it all intact, and repaired where it had been damaged in the fire.

Property Pride

"We are really proud that we've restored this home to blend so beautifully with the neighbourhood. The area is full of character homes and new builds are unique, too," says Trista. In fact, the couple planned on an ambitious project timeline of seven months. But they wanted to move carefully, and ended up ordering more millwork, completing the yardwork and painting the exterior brick.

"We really wanted this home to be a winner,"

says Adam. "As an income property, we need it to be profitable, but you can still have quality. I really dislike cookie cutter houses. I love key neighbourhoods, with one of a kind touches that keep it distinguished and hard to forget." Trista and Adam believe, now that they've saved this home and restored it, it will certainly have another 100 years of life.

"Lots of people have lived here, and lots more will," says Adam. "It still has lots of memories yet to be made."

All under the watchful eye of 22 new smoke detectors. (i)

Karin Melberg Schwier



COOL IDEAS FOR COLD CLIMATES

EMBRACING OUR WINTER WONDERLAND

 **JULIE BARNES**

Photo Credit: Alexander Exner

Many of us are guilty of it. We tell friends and family in other provinces or countries that it's time to plan a trip to Saskatoon. The scenic river trails, vibrant restaurant scene and our new art museum are all good reasons for them to book a flight or plan a road trip. But there's usually a caveat.

"Just make sure you come in July or August," we say.

Brenda Wallace, director of environmental and corporate initiatives with the City of Saskatoon, says our inherent

winter bias is revealed through this stipulation, and it's time for us to change our collective mindsets.

"Our biggest obstacle is our mindset and our attitude about winter. It's the feeling that we need to go into the basement and load up the Netflix menu or get on a plane and go to a hot destination." Instead, we should stop and consider Saskatoon's energetic community and existing amenities, "and how might we make use of those assets in a different season."

Aside from that mindset, other factors that make us want to curl up on the couch and stay there until spring are Saskatoon's dwindling hours of sunlight and below zero temperatures. But those challenges are being addressed in creative ways—here in Saskatoon and in other winter cities around the world.

Let There be Light

"Light shapes our behaviour in a space," says Sabine De Schutter, owner

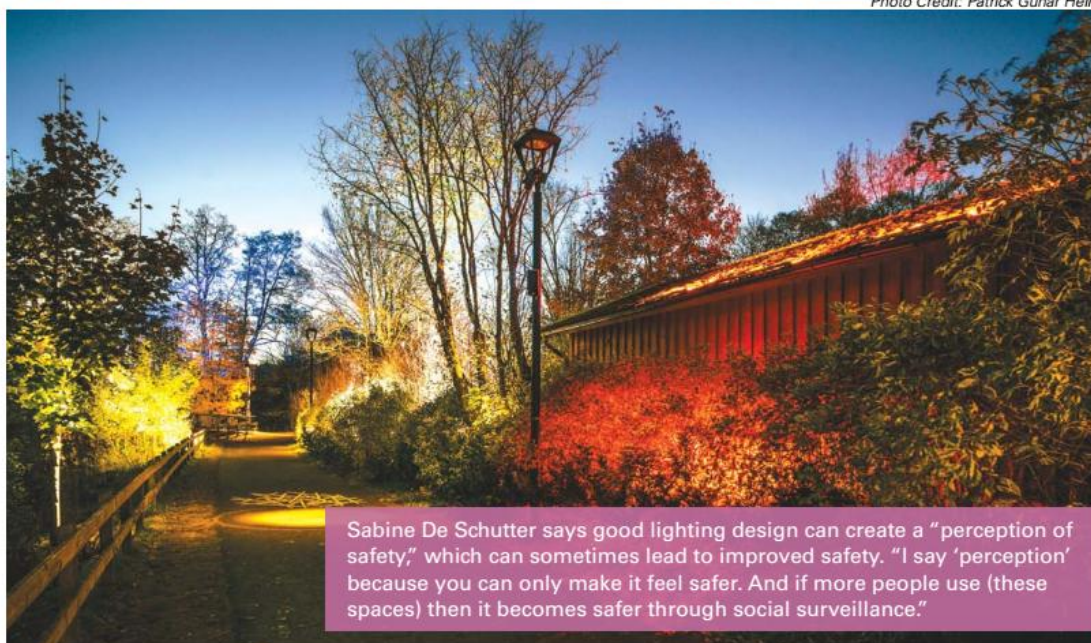
of Studio De Schutter, a lighting design firm based in Berlin. "Light in a public space can make you feel safe, it can make a space become more social, and it can have an impact on the image of a city as well, in terms of, 'Is it vibrant?' The thing we want to do in winter is create social spaces outdoors."

Sabine says lighting has evolved significantly in recent years. "It doesn't have to be just one colour at a time anymore. We can have multiple colours. We



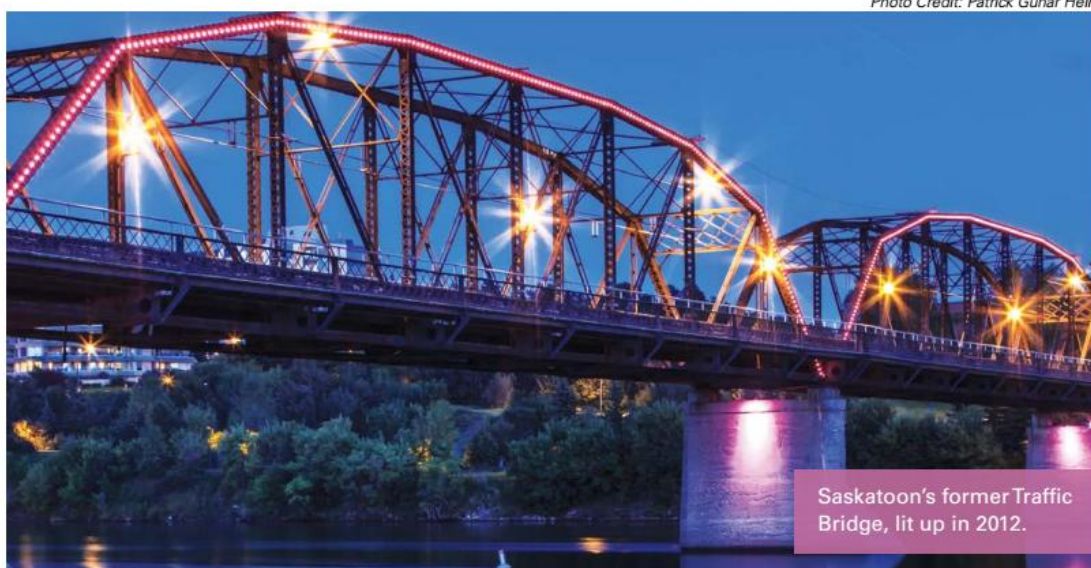
Studio De Schutter designed this lighting scheme for an event in Sweden. With shorter daylight hours during the winter, similar lighting along Saskatoon's Meewasin trails could make them more inviting after dark.

Photo Credit: Patrick Gunar Helin



Sabine De Schutter says good lighting design can create a "perception of safety," which can sometimes lead to improved safety. "I say 'perception' because you can only make it feel safer. And if more people use (these spaces) then it becomes safer through social surveillance."

Photo Credit: Patrick Gunar Helin



Saskatoon's former Traffic Bridge, lit up in 2012.

Photo Credit: Scott Prokop

can have a smart system that adapts to the environment or the situation." She describes light designs she's created for European market squares—the fixture stays the same, but the brightness and colours are adjusted, depending on the event. For example, the colours can be changed to reds and greens for a temporary Christmas market in the square.

Lighting can also be used in playful ways. Think using your phone to change the lighting in a public space, such as a park or underpass walkway.

Sabine has lent her talents to an exciting new development slated to open in 2020 at Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan's riverside site. A permanent four-season outdoor festival site is in the works with a comprehensive lighting installation for which she provided consultation.

"With our lighting proposal, we want to create an extension of the theatre's experience, and in addition, a flexible, magical and versatile lighting setting that can be adapted to the usage of the park," she says.

Lighting up the winter night is also a priority at River Landing, says Brenda. A complete lighting redesign is in the planning stage. The City is having "a look at what a redesign of the lighting could be in order to enable seasonal lighting displays and festivals."

Warming Up to Winter

Last winter, the City borrowed warm-up huts from Winnipeg as a pilot project. "They have an international design competition and it's one way to help animate the outdoors," says Brenda. "What we want to do here is engage our local ➤

design community and look at seasonal shelters and what role they might be able to play, and try to create both whimsy and function."

While we await our own warming huts, River Landing is already home to one warming feature—a stainless steel fire vessel. "It's a work of art created by Doug Bentham, and it's a natural gas fire vessel with a bit of an amphitheatre seating around it," says Brenda. It's been under lock and key as it requires a commissionaire to safely ignite the flame, but the public can book it for outdoor gatherings. While details are still being confirmed, Brenda says the City intends to have the fire vessel lit for at least a few hours on weekends beginning in January.

Creating a Winter Culture

This winter will see the return of Crockicurl on Broadway and Wanuskewin's KônaWinter Festival, featuring storytelling, round-dancing and competitions including bannock making, snow shoeing and much more.

A light conservatory will be erected this January at Broadway and 11th Street, as a result of funding received by the Broadway BID from the WintercityYXE grant program. It's described as an "'instagrammable' light-

encrusted conservatory to illuminate the evening hours and provide a stage for winter activities and performances."

Saskatoon will be hosting the Winter Cities Shake-up this January, a conference for people who live in winter cities and want to improve their community's quality of life year-round. The three-day event brings in experts from around the world to speak about urban design, operations and activities—through a winter lens.

Robin Mazumder, a Vanier Scholar, will one of the speakers at the conference.

He echoes Brenda's comments on shifting people's attitudes towards winter. "The way to do that is to give people fun things to do in the winter."

Robin grew up in Montreal and feels his home province has done a great job creating "a culture around winter" with festivals like Quebec City's Carnaval de Québec and Montreal's Montréal En Lumière. He fondly remembers trips to the maple sugar shacks, a common winter tradition for residents of La Belle Province.

When you associate these kinds of activities with winter, "it makes it a more natural process to look forward to it," says Robin. "People look forward to barbecuing or



Sabine consulted on the lighting design for Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan's redevelopment. A permanent venue is planned with a four-season park, which will be open to the public 24 hours a day. It's slated to open in 2020.



Sabine's lighting design will be interactive and adaptable for a variety of year-round events and festivals hosted at the site.

Photo Credits: AODBT & Studio De Schutter

going to the beach in the summer, so what are those equivalents in winter? Let's put in the effort to really boost that."

He admits to enjoying warm weather, as most people do, but says, "It's a really special thing to go out for a hike in the cold and then go into a

house with a fireplace and some warm drinks. That's a really nice experience that you wouldn't be able to get if you didn't live in a place that had winter." (i)

Julie Barnes

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Barb Biddle, left, President of Montgomery Place Community Association, stands with Leslee Newman.

MONTGOMERY PLACE

THE BEST PRESERVED VETERANS' SUBDIVISION IN THE COUNTRY

 RUTH BITNER

Montgomery Place – on the city's southwestern edge – is a Saskatoon treasure, a tangible reminder of the country's wartime history. Its story is rooted in the mid-1940s, just after the Second World War, when it was established as a veterans' community.

Under the Veterans Lands Act (VLA), property was purchased in many Canadian cities to help returning servicemen buy or build homes. In 1945, the VLA bought 230 acres just west of Saskatoon. Three hundred and sixty three lots were

surveyed that year. The half-acre holdings were intended for gardens, with room to raise chickens. Gravel streets were narrow. There were no sidewalks. Ditches provided drainage. Except for natural bush, there were no trees.

The new community was named after Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, commander of Allied ground forces at Normandy on D-Day, 1944. Street names honour battles—Dieppe, Caen, Ortona, and military commanders—Brigadier John Rockingham, Lieutenant Colonel John Merritt, General

Arthur Currie, and others. Lancaster Boulevard was named for the famed bomber.

Built According to Plan

In 1945, the VLA contracted Miners Construction to build 25 houses according to approved plans: two styles of bungalows and two storey-and-a-half homes, each with a full basement. VLA homes were usually about 800 square feet although a few were smaller and some were slightly larger. Kitchen, living room, a bedroom or two, and a bathroom were squeezed into the compact

space. The VLA set minimum requirements for the size of each room, specified ceiling heights and even the number of closets. The first homes were heated with coal furnaces.

Veterans could also build their own homes to VLA standards, and after 1946, most did. With 10 per cent down, a qualified veteran could finance the purchase, at 3.5 per cent interest over 25 years. Twenty-eight families moved into Montgomery Place in 1946—25 in VLA-constructed houses and three in homes they built themselves. ➤

The Third Page

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1947



In 1947 the *Star Phoenix* pictured new homes in Montgomery Place. The VLA approved four styles but veterans could build their own with VLA approval.

These are seven types of houses completed at Montgomery Place, the small holdings project on Eleventh Street near the Government Elevator. The houses were built under supervision of Veterans' Land Act officials. The houses are built on half-acre lots and the community, planned to extend eventually to 150 houses, will be a scene of activities in spring as the veterans, nearly all employed in the city, begin breaking land and preparing to produce garden crops.



Photo Credit: The Star Phoenix

In 1946, the average cost per VLA-constructed home, including land, was \$6,300, and the average monthly payment, excluding taxes, \$20.30. But land sales were slow, prompting the lifting of restrictions to allow non-veterans to buy property. In the 1950s, development took off and in 1955, the subdivision became part of the City of Saskatoon. By 1960 Montgomery Place consisted of 305 homes.

A Shared Sense of Community

From the beginning, Montgomery Place residents shared a strong sense of place. "The veterans connection forged our identity," says Leslee Newman, who grew up in the community. "It didn't dissipate. If anything, it grew stronger when the second generation came of age, and now the third generation

Community /kə'myōnədə/

Noun meaning:

"a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common",

"a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals".

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CROSSMOUNT

An Idea, A Place, A Way of Life



Hugh and Mary Fabian's home in Montgomery Place, c. 1946.

Photo Credit: Montgomery Place Community Association Archives

and sometimes the fourth, are carrying on that sense of identity."

Montgomery Place exerts a strong pull on those who grew up there. "I always visualized being back here," says Barb Biddle, President of Montgomery Place Community Association.

"I think when we move away, we do so with the intent of coming back," adds Leslee. Barb and Leslee agree that attachment applies to those from non-veteran families, too.

Keeping the Story Alive

In 1987, to ensure the community's beginnings would not be forgotten, Leslee's father Bernie, a Navy veteran, and his friend Lew Winger, also a veteran, came up with the idea for a memorial cairn. They approached the Community

Association who organized a Cairn Committee to work with the City, plan, design and fundraise. The memorial, located in Montgomery Park, was dedicated in 1989.

Other initiatives keep the story alive. Barb spent three years researching the name of every veteran who lived in the subdivision from 1946 to 1977. A black granite pillar inscribed with 565 names stands next to the cairn. Cedar signposts strategically placed around the core area explain the origin of street names.

On November 11 residents of Montgomery gather at the memorial cairn for a Service of Remembrance. The event was especially appropriate this year as the world marks the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Fittingly, Leslee ➤

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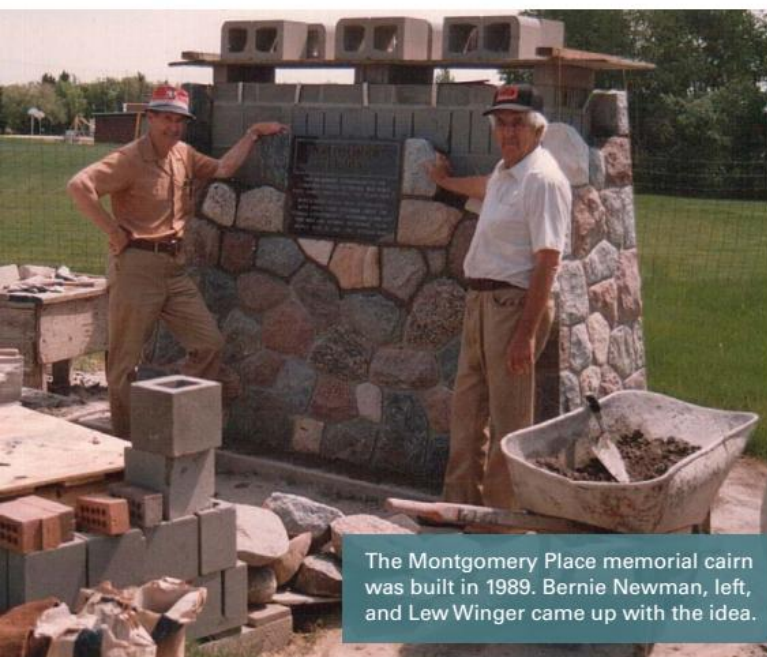
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Korean War veteran and Montgomery Place resident Don Leier lays a wreath at the 2016 Service of Remembrance in Montgomery Park. Leier initiated the annual service in the mid-1990s.



The Montgomery Place memorial cairn was built in 1989. Bernie Newman, left, and Lew Winger came up with the idea.

Photo Credit: Leslee Newman



The memorial cairn in Montgomery Park was officially dedicated to the memory of community veterans.

and Jim Earle, son of an Army veteran, conducted the annual service initiated by Korean War veteran Don Leier in the mid-1990s.

The Quest for Recognition

It was this sense of history and community that prompted the quest for national recognition of Montgomery Place. Barb, daughter of original residents George and Doris Thompson, spearheaded the initiative in 2014.

"I felt this was really an important part of Canadian history," says Barb. "What struck me was that there was very little record of these communities. I just got intrigued and started looking at the information about how they determine if something should be recognized as a National Historic Site. I kept thinking, 'We meet that criteria.'"

Barb found that no other VLA community in Canada had been designated a National Historic Site and, though not optimistic, she forged ahead with the idea.

"We didn't think of Montgomery Place as the only such place. We just thought it was a really good example," she recalls. As it turned out, Montgomery Place is indeed the best preserved veterans' subdivision in the country. Furthermore, research showed that no other country had a program quite like it.

The research report found that unlike other VLA settlements in Canada, Montgomery Place has remained essentially intact. Bordered by rail yards to the south, an industrial complex to the east, the elevator and a major roadway to the north, the subdivision remains physically separate from the city, contributing to its

distinctiveness. The original layout remains much as it was designed in 1945, though it has expanded to the south, west, and recently to the north. Most of the original homes in the core area remain, though many have been modernized and some homeowners have subdivided their lots. There are still no sidewalks and ditches continue to provide drainage. No commercial establishments have encroached on the area.

National Significance

In its Summary of Significance report, Parks Canada's Historic Sites and Monuments Board noted that Montgomery Place "retains many key elements of its original design ... is a tight-knit community which is very aware of its origins ... and makes every effort to honour its original inhabitants and their wartime sacrifices."

In 2016 Barb's dream came true when Montgomery Place was declared a National Historic Site.

Leslee wholeheartedly agrees with the honour bestowed. "To be named a National Historic Site affirms what we believe to be true. Montgomery Place was, and is, a special community in Saskatoon and in all of Canada." 

Ruth Bitner

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HOME FOOD:

A NEW LEVEL OF GINGERBREAD HOUSE CREATION



KARIN MELBERG SCHWIER



MARION MURAWSKY

In 1812, the Brothers Grimm terrified little German children with a, well, grim tale about a wicked cannibalistic witch in the woods who lived in a gingerbread house covered with sweets and candy. With such irresistible treats, she lured little Hansel and Gretel to potential demise as gruesome dinner in her oven.

Since then, the gingerbread house has become more festive than frightening, thanks to people like Marion Murawsky, a home economist who taught for

over 33 years in Saskatoon public schools, and another decade at the University of Saskatchewan College of Education. Marion, who is about as far from wicked witch as you can get, has made gingerbread house building not only a treasured tradition in her own family, but for hundreds of students who passed through her classes. Besides, how can anyone who has a kitchen that smells of warm fragrant ginger, cinnamon and cloves be wicked?

Making Baking Traditions

"It's not something we had when I was growing up in Spiritwood," says Marion. "But for the last 32 years, probably, it's been something we do as a family."

Marion and husband Orest (the two met in grade seven) made it "a thing" with their own children Paige and Graham. "I was always intrigued by gingerbread houses in Christmas magazines, so thought I'd try one and it just took off."

Even when very young,

the children knew that gingerbread houses didn't come as store-bought prefab. No, decisions had to be made: a cabin, castle, townhouse, two-storey, a garage? There were measurements to be made, plans drawn on graph paper, load-bearing considerations, exterior and interior design and lighting choices, landscaping options, and chemistry problems. Just how can you turn a sucker into a stained glass window?

The Murawsky siblings sometimes constructed their

own houses; other times they shared contracting responsibilities and learned to work together. Fighting on the build site was not allowed, but opinions were often vigorously expressed.

Gingerbread 101

Although her career choice was to use her Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics to become a clothing designer, Marion returned to University for an Education degree. She taught home economics and commercial cooking at Mount Royal, City Park and Walter Murray. In a segment of the food services course, she gave students a choice between commercial cake decorating and a from-scratch gingerbread house.

"There's a lot to think about when you take on a gingerbread house," says Marion. "My students worked hard and sometimes there were tears when things didn't go the way they planned. But when it was over, they were so proud of their accomplishment. I've heard from so many who started the tradition in their own families, and years later, their children are now enjoying it, too."

Gingerbread house

construction did have its dangerous side. Originally, Marion used burnt sugar to 'glue' the sections together. Melted sugar at 350 F can cause serious burns if it touches skin. "It worked great, but sometimes I'd end up with all sorts of blisters if a roofline was being stubborn." She now uses Royal icing (see recipe) and while joins are rustic and not as seamless, construction is less painful. Besides, a gingerbread house should look loved and lived in, not some sterile staged-for-sale property.

Friendly Family Competition

Today, the tradition has spread to include Paige's husband Matt and Graham's wife Alison. The competitive spirit is alive and well in the two in-laws and the evening set aside for decorating can get pretty spirited and silly. Orest serves wine that has replaced milk served decades ago when the kids were small. The patterns Marion has saved over the years are annotated with comments, and favourites are smudged with buttery little fingerprints and corn syrup.

"It's just so much fun to have our kids, their partners, and now the three grandchildren come ➤



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over to share this," says Marion. "We can relive the excitement Paige and Graham had as we watch Lawson, now six. Penelope is two, and Camper is only five months so this will be his very first gingerbread house. I can hardly wait."

Every year, Marion helps Paige, who is also a teacher, create a gingerbread house project for her grade one class. For Paige's grade four/five class of 24 students, one year Marion made individual houses for each to decorate. "That was so much fun!" Marion smiles. "I'll never do that again," she adds in a whisper.

Enjoying the Spoils

The question Marion always gets? "Can you eat it?" "Sure! Aside from sampling quite a few of the decorating

supplies like candy, licorice, nuts, pretzels, cereal, chocolate and whatever, you can eat the house," Marion promises. "Gingerbread, when it's made, baked and dried properly, lasts quite awhile. It's crispy but still tastes fresh."

In fact, the penultimate tradition in the Murawsky household is the glorious Smashing of the Gingerbread House on New Year's Eve. Rather than letting the house turn derelict with dust over the coming months, the house is razed. Once again, the sweet and spicy demo will be shared – without a witch in sight – as the Murawskys welcome 2019 with thoughts of the 33rd annual housing development. (i)

Karin Melberg Schwier



Marion's grandson Lawson takes great care in selecting the perfect accents during an annual family decorating bee. Lighting and elaborate decor are always important features.



Step 1: Making and Baking

DOUGH

1 cup granulated sugar
½ cup water
½ cup corn syrup

1 tbsp ground ginger
2 tsp each cinnamon, cloves
1 cup butter or margarine, room temperature

4 cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ tsp baking soda

*Recipe developed by Marion Murawsky, B.S.H.Ed., B.Ed.

In a small saucepan bring to boil sugar, water, corn syrup, ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Remove from heat. Pour mixture over butter in a large bowl and stir until butter melts, then cool to lukewarm.

Stir in flour mixture; mix well. Cover and refrigerate overnight (optional; if going to use next day leave out.) Let dough soften slightly at room temperature. Divide into fourths and roll on parchment to 1/8 inch thickness. Place patterns on dough, the largest pieces in the centre. Cut out with sharp knife. Save and reroll scraps.

Bake 12-15 minutes or until light brown. Over bake slightly so pieces are very firm. Leave pieces on parchment until ready for construction.

To create stained glass windows: Line your cookie sheet with parchment (not wax paper) and place uncooked gingerbread on top. Crush clear hard candy (Lifesavers, hard suckers; if using Jolly Rancher, leave whole) in the desired shade. Cut out your windows and generously spread the candy to fill the space. Candy will melt as gingerbread bakes to clear glass look. For icing latticework after gingerbread cools, use a piping bag.

ROYAL ICING

6 tbsp hot water
3 tbsp meringue powder
½ tsp almond extract
1 pound icing sugar (4 cups)
¼ tsp cream of tartar

Beat water, almond extract and meringue powder until frothy. Add icing sugar and cream of tartar and continue beating until icing stands in peaks. Colour as desired. Icing should not be so stiff that it is dry since it will crack easily. If icing becomes too thick, add water. Icing will keep for 2 weeks unrefrigerated if covered. It keeps for months in the fridge.

Step 2: Putting it all together

Construction

Bake and completely cool gingerbread. Using Royal icing, attach front and back to sides. Always let icing harden before moving on. Add roof pieces, propping if necessary (cans of soup make good props). Decorate the house using colourful and edible materials.

Step 3: Plan the date for your gingerbread house smashing!

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Downtown Christmas lights,
2nd Avenue South, ca. 1965

HOMEtown Reflections

 **JEFF O'BRIEN**

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ON THE STREETS OF SASKATOON

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library – PH-2002-14-102

The likes of “Candy Cane Lane” and “Smurphy Crescent” have been part of Christmas in Saskatoon for more than half a century. Even though Saskatoon Transit no longer puts on a formal Twinkle Tour, people here still pile into their cars every Christmas to take in the lights around town.

Mid-Winter Celebrations

There have been mid-winter celebrations probably for

as long as there have been people to celebrate the middle of winter. Frequently these included decorations, often of the evergreen, bonfire and candlelight variety. But for more exterior illumination-inclined folks, the idea of lighting up the outside of the house would have to wait for Thomas Edison.

In 1880, Edison set up a sensational Christmas light display on the grounds of his factory in New Jersey,

where people could see it from passing trains. A couple years later, he wired up a rotating indoor Christmas tree with 80 blinking red, white and blue lights. “One can hardly imagine anything prettier,” a newspaper reported. Christmas lights weren’t cheap. A string of 16 cost \$12 in 1900. But by 1914, the price had dropped to \$1.75. Prices continued to fall as the technology improved and the popularity increased.

The Streets of Saskatoon

The first public Christmas displays on record in Saskatoon were in 1924 when the Retail Merchants Association got a grant from the city to decorate downtown streets with lighted Christmas trees and holiday banners. The City electrical department took over the job in 1925, and lights have brightened up our streets (and our hearts) every holiday season since,

even during the lean years of the Great Depression and the Second World War. In 2011, the City proposed shutting off the lights for good, saving the city \$200,000 annually. But people objected strongly, and the lights stayed on.

Twinkle Tours

For homeowners, outdoor Christmas lights became popular during the boom years of the 1950s. In Saskatoon, 1954 was a banner year for Christmas decorating. The newspaper reported that more homes than ever before were decorated for the holidays, adding: "Some sections of the city almost rival the Exhibition midway with their displays of coloured lights... and many original scenes have been built in front yards, all carrying out the Christmas theme. In the

The lights on 21st Street looking toward the Bessborough Hotel, 1959.



Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library – QC 1122-1

older residential areas, tall evergreen trees have been lighted to their tops, and in the new districts, outlining of roofs, doors and front step railings in lights has made up for the lack of shrubbery."

That year, the Knights of

Columbus gave out cash awards for the best decorated houses with a religious theme, part of its "Put the Christ Back in Christmas" campaign. Also that year, Saskatoon's transit department put on its first official Christmas lights bus tour.

City transit officials had expected a low turnout. One city councillor even argued against the idea, expressing doubt that anyone would be interested. "I can't see the people going for it," he sniped in a Grinchy kind of way. ➤

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The City Hall Christmas display, 1987.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library – CP-9339

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Instead, they found themselves scrambling to meet the demand, and for the next four nights a cavalcade of city buses took holiday sightseers around Saskatoon's most decorated streets. More than a thousand people – 32 busloads – took the hour-long tour that year, with more people following behind in their cars.

The city buses ran every Christmas for the next 25 years. But ridership dropped by more than two thirds between 1978–1979, and after that, the city's transit manager recommended the tours be discontinued. He blamed the drop on the trend toward energy conservation, which, he said, "has significantly reduced the number of displays and the attractiveness of this type of tour."

The Christmas Crescents

The idea of "Christmas Crescents" – whole blocks decorated around a single theme – goes back to at least the mid-1960s. The Kiwanis Club used to give out awards for the best-decorated block. In 1967, Candy Cane Lane (McDermid Crescent) won. But there were so many great displays that year, the club gave honourable mention to five other streets: "Angel Drive" (Valens Crescent); "Windmill Crescent" (Mills Crescent); "Tartan Row" (McLean Crescent); "Christmas Bell Crescent" (Bell Crescent); and "Wreath Wonderland" – a combination of McLorg Street and the 2600 block of Wiggins Avenue.

On Bell Crescent, of course, they put up Christmas bells. People living on Bell

sometimes competed with each other to see who could put up the best ones. But the main competition was with the other streets. "Candy Cane Lane was our biggest rival and usually took the award for best decorated block," one Bell Crescent old-timer recalled.

Another resident, Murray Stone, remembers someone from down the street coming over one night, probably in the mid-1960s, with instructions for building a Christmas Bell display out of cardboard and papier mache. "This sounded like a fun idea

and our neighbours were also pretty enthusiastic about it, so my father and I put it together and decorated the bell so as to co-ordinate with the sea foam green siding colour of the house." About two-thirds of the houses on Bell were decorated that year, he recalled, with almost everyone joining the fun in subsequent years.

On Murphy Crescent, the Peckenpaugh family has been coordinating the annual Smurf-themed display since 1976. A letter goes out to residents in late November or early December, and the

displays start going up in mid-December. About half the houses on the street participate, and, according to Dale Peckenpaugh, there has been a policy on the street from the beginning that "If you move, you leave your Smurfs behind" so that the new owners can carry on the tradition.

But it wasn't all eggnog and mistletoe. Displays were sometimes vandalized, and bad weather could wreak havoc. And for some, the light shows could get a wee bit too popular. "It was like living in a goldfish bowl

for six weeks every year," one person complained. "Bumper to bumper from the time it got dark until late at night." There were also the inevitable conflicts between those hoping to drive by quickly and those stopping for a more in-depth examination. "Places on the road where cars had to stop and then get moving again became icy, leading to much spinning of tires and occasional immobility," says Murray. "Extreme cold led to localized ice fog from vehicle exhaust. I enjoyed watching all this from ➤



Bob Hinitt's Christmas display in 1963.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library – CP 9339



And again in 1966.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library – CP 5158

FILLING HINITT'S HOLIDAY SNOWSHOES

In Saskatoon, you can't talk about Christmas lights without mentioning Bob Hinitt, whose annual displays were a "must see" event for people here from 1947-2005. Bob passed away in 2011, but others quickly filled the gap. Among them, Scott Lambie's light show on Clinkskill Drive. Timed to music, it's been drawing visitors by the thousands every year since 2012. At 75,000 lights, this year's display is his largest yet. The secret? LED lights. Inexpensive and practically unbreakable, they're rated for 50,000 hours. Just long enough for Scott to put up his display every Christmas for the next 420 years.

the warmth and safety of our front room.”

Some homeowners recalled the frustration of trying to get out of their driveways. Others just gave up and parked their cars on a nearby (undecorated) street until things calmed down.

The Modern Era

Today, it seems like more people than ever before decorate their homes and yards for the holiday season. This includes some truly spectacular displays. Bob Hinitt may be gone (see sidebar) but his legacy definitely lives on. But the Saskatoon Transit Christmas light tours are a thing of the past. Revived for a while in the 1990s as a

charitable partnership with the *StarPhoenix* and CKOM, they were later discontinued. Private groups in Saskatoon continue to organize bus tours, including to the famous Enchanted Forest display, an annual event at the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo since 1999.

Indeed, the Enchanted Forest tour may be partly why Christmas Crescents traffic isn't as heavy as it once was. But even in this jaded modern era, people still love to pile the kids into the car, bring up the “twinkle tour” list from the newspaper, and head out for a couple hours of holiday wonderment. (H)

Jeff O'Brien



Above, none other than a house on “Smurfy Crescent”, and the Grinch makes an annual appearance.



Do you have outdoor Christmas light display photos you would like to share with us?

Email info@saskatoon-home.ca and include your photo, address and year. We will share our favourites on social media throughout the season.



Christmas lights – and bells – on Bell Crescent, 1965.

Photo Credit: Local History Room – Saskatoon Public Library – QC-3659



I WAS HERE

A CHANCE TO MAKE YOUR MARK

 JULIE BARNES

Photo Credit: Cheryl McDougall

We've all heard stories of historical artifacts found within a home's walls during a renovation or demolition. Old newspapers once used for insulation are revealed, giving a glimpse of what the world looked like when the house was originally built. Layers of aged wallpaper provide a peek at design trends over the decades. An article in a previous issue of HOME magazine shared how coins, letters, 'adult' magazines, telegrams, stamps

and toy soldiers have all been unearthed in Saskatoon homes in recent years.

Some items may have been left behind by accident, or for functional purposes such as the newspaper for insulation, while others may have been purposefully left to create veritable time capsules for future owners to discover.

Signing of the Studs

Today, homeowners are deliberately making their mark on their new homes

and renovations—each in their own distinctive ways. Cheryl McDougall is one such residential geostasher.

As the framing was finalized on her new house two years ago, Cheryl invited her family over for dinner at her home, which was just a block away from her new build. After dinner, they all walked over to the construction site, and each family member had the opportunity to write a message to Cheryl on

the framing that would eventually envelop her new fireplace.

"I wanted to invite my family over to sign that area because the fireplace is the heart of the home," says Cheryl. "We hang out as a family there, and we sit around it at Christmas and open presents there, so it seemed like the perfect spot to do it."

Her parents, her twin sister, her niece, Hannah (then 11), and nephew, Seth (then ➤



Above, Cheryl McDougall, far right, invited her family to her new home during the framing stage so they could leave messages on the studs before the drywall was hung.

Photo Credit: Cheryl McDougall

nine), rendered their well wishes in black Sharpie. Cheryl says Seth had just discovered hashtags, "so if you come across multiple hashtags, those are his."

While the kids' messages are funny, those left by her parents and sister are thoughtful and heartwarming, Cheryl says. "They're very special. My family is proud of everything I've created and you can see that in the messages they wrote."

Creating Footprints in Concrete

Fast forward two years, and this past summer Cheryl has made her new house into a beautiful home for herself and her baby daughter. The landscaping was underway and the concrete pavers in the backyard were being poured. With the help of her mom, Cheryl gently pressed her

eight-month-old daughter's feet into the concrete (photo seen on page 62), leaving an indelible mark she'll treasure for years to come.

"You can see the little toes," she says. "I'm happy they're there so that I can always remember how small she once was."

Integrating Items into the Foundation

Liz Carswell, a new home advisor with Lexis Homes, says that Lexis loves to get homeowners and their children involved in the build "to make it more personalized and fun for them," says Liz. "Some write messages on the studs, or religious passages throughout the home starting at the entrance. The kids like drawing pictures or marking their names in their future bedrooms. I've

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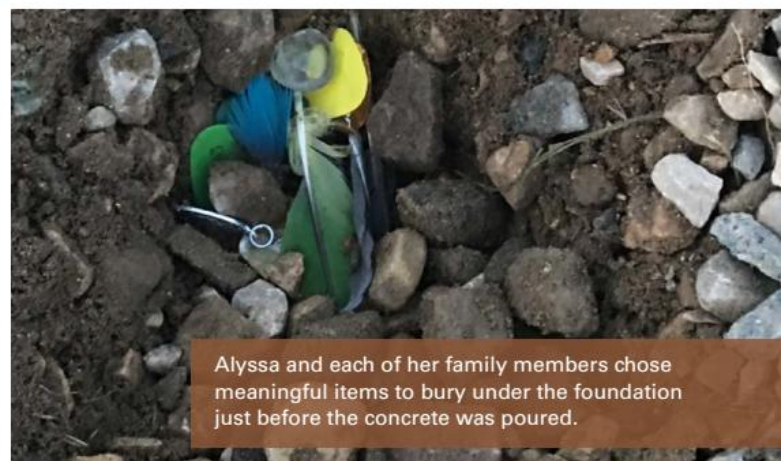


One month after handing over the keys to their new homeowners, Lexis Homes found out their clients were having a baby—evidently, something they were hoping for back in the framing stage.

Photo Credit: Lexis Developments



Alyssa Matthews-Schmidt selected several stones to place above the door frames in her new family home.



Alyssa and each of her family members chose meaningful items to bury under the foundation just before the concrete was poured.

Photo Credit: Alyssa Matthews-Schmidt

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seen so many families just delighted that they have a piece of themselves behind the walls or embedded into the foundation forever."

Alyssa Matthews-Schmidt is one of those Lexis homeowners. Before the construction crew poured the foundation of her family's new acreage home, Alyssa, her husband Adam, and two daughters each chose meaningful items to bury at the centre of the house's footprint.

"My husband is an accomplished guitar player, so he added guitar picks," says Alyssa. The family owns five parrots, so Alyssa took a feather from each bird to include as her addition. Her older daughter chose a St. Christopher medallion, and her younger daughter selected some gemstones.

Immuring Special Objects

Alyssa also placed stones above the doorframes before the drywall was hung. "I took certain ones that promote love, well-being and good health and placed one above each bedroom door and the main front door," she says.

There's actually a word for this practice. It's called immurement, and it stems from the Latin "im" meaning "in" and "murus" meaning "wall," which literally translates to "walling in."

Pausing to Celebrate Or Gently Chide

Some people choose to inscribe bon mots on the studs, imprint tiny feet into concrete, fuse items into the foundation, or enclose special items within the walls. Whatever it might be, each practice is an ➤



Hi! We're the
Shinseki's! We
remodeled this
bathroom Summer
1995

If you're reading this,
that means you're
remodeling the bathroom
again. What's wrong
with the way we
did it ...?



Hi! I'm Cassie the
Bunny Rabbit.
I lived here
too!
(I'm potty trained!)

I'm going
to be the
next potty
trained bunny

opportunity to pause and celebrate the momentous milestone that is building a new home.

Or perhaps it's just an opportunity to gently chide a future owner as, several years into the future, they begin a renovation to put their own stamp on the place.

A couple living in California did just that in 1995—leaving a message within the walls that was discovered 23 years later by subsequent homeowners doing a bathroom makeover.

The message, written alongside a photo of themselves, read: "Hi! We're the Shinseki's! We remodeled this bathroom summer 1995. If you're reading this, that means you're remodeling the bathroom again. What's wrong with the way we did it?!?" (1)

Julie Barnes



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